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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Geography Division, ORR  
Project Initiation Memorandum

To: Chief, Geographic Research

Project No. 64.1487

From: Chief, Geography Division

Date: 10 December 56

1. Subject of Proposed Project: Geographical Analysis of the Soviet Arctic City of Noril'sk.
2. Statement of the Problem: To analyze and determine if possible Soviet intentions as reflected in the development of Noril'sk as an Arctic center.

*Re-submitted  
12-11-56*

The past decade has seen unusual growth of several urban centers in the Soviet Arctic. Although earlier mining and other activities gave rise to centers of a similar type, the traditional population concentrations in the Arctic were primarily of the coastal or river-port type, e.g. Murmansk, Arkhangel'sk, Igarka, and others. During the war, increased operations in the north coupled with a large labor force made up of POW's and forced laborers gave rise to settlements of substantial size and economic importance. Noril'sk, with an estimated population of 85,000, is foremost among these new urban centers. Its mining and metallurgical enterprises have developed into a sizable industrial base that has gained national as well as regional importance. Valuable minerals -- nickel, copper, and cobalt -- are exported to other Soviet industrial areas. Local fuel (coal) supports Arctic maritime operations. Atomic developments have also been reported in the city. With its existing installations plus the expansion of air facilities and railroads in the north, strategically Noril'sk is a potential supply and staging area for military operations within the Soviet northern offense-defense perimeter. The large increase in population has been instrumental in the development of many urban amenities (permanent buildings, paved streets, and public utilities) characteristic of more southerly towns and cities.

3. Requester: Self-initiated

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4. Responsible Analyst: [REDACTED] USSR Branch

4.a. Cooperation Desired: 1 map to be prepared by D/GC.

5. Estimated Man Hours: 450 professional

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6. Probable completion date: 1 April 1957

7. Probable Form of Final Publication: CIA [REDACTED]

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Acting Chief, Geographic Research

Assistant Director, ORR

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20 MAR 1957

Date

20 Mar 57

Date

18 MAR 1957

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OUTLINE: Noril'sk-Urban Study

- I. Introduction
- II. Locational Aspects
- III. Historical Development
- IV. Urban Characteristics
  - A. Physical Layout
  - B. Functional Structure
    - 1. Industrial
    - 2. Residential
    - 3. Commercial
    - 4. Administrative
  - C. Public Utilities
    - 1. Power
    - 2. Water Supply
    - 3. Communications
    - 4. Transportation
  - D. Population
  - E. Environmental Influences
- V. Importance
  - A. Position in Arctic Regional Structure
    - 1. Industrial
    - 2. Transportation
  - B. Strategic Role in Northern Offense-Defense Perimeter
- VI. Trends and Prospects

Note: In the final report the sequence of topics may be entirely changed. The physical influences will be introduced where appropriate.

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